

Rare Animals of Louisiana



Manatee

Trichechus manatus

Rarity Rank: SZN/G2

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure



Identification:

- Large, docile, barrel-shaped aquatic mammal
- Head small, flattened in profile
- Upper jaw extends beyond lower jaw, nostrils placed on top of snout, with stiff bristles around mouth
- Lacks external ears
- Front limbs modified into rounded flippers that are much more flexible than those of cetaceans
- Hind limbs absent
- Tail large, spatula-shaped. Adults may reach 4 m (13 ft) and 1,000 kg (2,205 lb)
- Generally restricted to rivers and estuaries although manatees may enter salt water when traveling from site to site
- Found in waters with dense submerged aquatic beds or floating vegetation
- Herbivorous; eats a variety of aquatic plants

Habitat:

- Marine open water, bays, and rivers
- Generally restricted to rivers and estuaries although manatees may enter salt water when traveling from site to site
- Often found in waters with submerged aquatic beds or floating vegetation

Food habits:

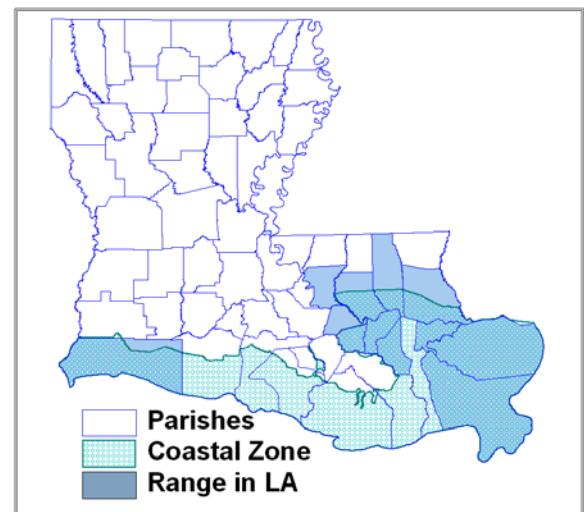
The manatee is herbivorous and eats a variety of aquatic plants

Range:

- FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC
- Found along the northern Atlantic coast of South America, the Caribbean coast of South and Central America, and the Greater Antilles north of Florida

Reproduction:

- Males reach reproductive maturity between 9 and 10 years but are able to mate at 2 years
- Females can reproduce at 4 or 5 years but are most successful after 7 to 9 years
- Calves remain with mothers for 2 years



Range based on occurrences in Natural Heritage database

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- For the most part one calf is born at a time though twins have been reported
- Calves can consume plants after 3 weeks

Threats:

- Collisions with boats and barges
- Death due to flood-control structures
- Poaching and vandalism
- Habitat loss
- Pollution
- Harassment by boaters and divers
- Natural factors such as unusually cold weather and outbreaks of red tide may also influence population levels.

Beneficial Management Practices:

- Public education programs
- Protection against harassment
- Enforcing no wake zones in areas with manatees

LA River Basins:

Pearl, Pontchartrain, Barataria, Mermentau, Calcasieu, Sabine



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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For more information, please visit our Web pages at

www.wlf.louisiana.gov/experience/naturalheritage or call 225-765-2811

www.BTNEP.org or 1-800-259-0869